



**Testimony submitted March 2, 2010 for
HB 5243, AAC Sober Houses Human Services Public Hearing**

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The Community Renewal Team, Inc.**

Good Morning Representative Walker, Senator Doyle and Members of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Theresa Nicholson, and I am the Assistant Vice President of Behavioral Health Care for The Community Renewal Team, Inc. CRT is the largest Community Action Agency in Connecticut and is committed to using result-oriented, cost-effective strategies to serve those most in need.

I am here today to support raised bill No. 5243, an Act Concerning Sober Houses.

As a Behavioral Health provider serving more than 2,000 clients this year in our Behavioral Health clinics in Hartford, we are very aware of the importance of and need for Sober Houses as a part of our continuum of recovery care. CRT does not run Sober Houses but uses them quite often to assist those clients needing a sober place to live to support them in their recovery.

Since 2007, CCAR Recovery Housing Coalition, in collaboration with DMHAS, has created standards for operating a Recovery House. DMHAS has also created a certification process by which Recovery Houses can receive DMHAS reimbursement under SAGA and ATR for Recovery (Sober) Housing.

The standards for both CCAR and DMHAS are very structured, and are both client- and recovery-based. The issue is that they are not mandatory. Anyone can open a Sober House if they follow the zoning guidelines for the town in which they want to open the sober house.

I am not concerned about those that take advantage of training from CCAR to open a Recovery House or those that are certified by DMHAS, but I am very concerned that there is no current process to

monitor those owners who do not choose to participate in CCAR Recovery Housing Coalition and/or become DMHAS Certified.

Recovery Housing is an essential part of recovery for many of the clients we serve. These clients are often- times early in recovery and need housing that is regulated to ensure it meets the minimum standard set by CCAR Recovery Housing Coalition or DMAHS Certification. We cannot allow our clients in recovery to be taken advantage of by someone running a Sober/Recovery House that is not holding itself to the standards set by CCAR and DMHAS. We must make this a mandatory requirement for opening a Recovery House.

Thank you.

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